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ABSTRACT

Extracurricular activities in secondary schools are an important part of student preparation for adult life. This document presents guidelines on the components, administration, and evaluation of student activities. It suggests that a comprehensive activity program should include student government, publications, cultural activities, service clubs, sports, honor societies, and special interest groups. In reviewing the administration of student activities, the author discusses the activity program's objectives, the principal's role, the responsibilities of the student activities director, and the criteria to use in selecting and compensating activity advisers. Eleven criteria for evaluating student activities are presented, including participation levels, the variety of activities available, skill development, school and community service provision, and adequacy of accounting and supervision. The document also stresses the importance of viable student councils and student governments. Six brief profiles are given of school activities in secondary schools in Mississippi, Colorado, Idaho, and Virginia. (RW)

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STUDENT ACTIVITIES

. . . an Extension of the Curriculum

Prior to this century, little or no attention was given to student activities; but when the secondary school began to diversify, the cocurriculum took on more importance. Today parents and students expect the school to provide a broad extracurricular program. Even in this era of back-to-basics, declining enrollment, and budget constraints, surveys reflect enthusiastic support for student activities.

According to the American College Testing Survey of 1977, "the single most common characteristic among successful people is that they were involved in student activities at school." Organized student activities are a vital component of the student's training and preparation for participation in a democratic form of government.

Many statements of objectives for student activity programs have been advanced over the years, but the primary goal of a secondary school's activity program should be to involve all the students. This may appear to be an unrealistic goal; but if all the students in the school are encouraged to participate in at least one out-of-class activity, the climate for the activities program is considerably enhanced.

The extracurriculum has many advantages. "It has been suggested, for example, that activities promote school spirit and also provide a healthy (and supervised) outlet for adolescent energy. Others see the school club as a small-scale democracy, inculcating in its members the fundamental norms and values of the larger society."[1]

1. Robert C. Serow, "The High School Extracurriculum: Cui Bono?" NASSP Bulletin, April 1979, pp. 90-94.

EA 014 190

What Constitutes a Viable Activities Program?

Most people agree that a comprehensive school activity program should include: student government, student publications, drama, music, service clubs, sports, intramurals, cheerleading, honor societies, school assemblies, and other special interest groups. The student body and local community will dictate the need for additional activities but care must be taken to ensure variety.

Numerous statements of student activity objectives have been proposed during the years. Richard A. Gorton of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee notes that an examination of these statements suggests program objectives should help all students:

- To learn how to use their leisure time more wisely
- To increase and use constructively whatever unique talents and skills they possess
- To develop new avocational and recreational interests and skills
- To develop a more positive attitude toward the value of avocational and recreational activities
- To increase their knowledge of and skill in functioning as a leader and/or as a member of a group
- To develop a more realistic and positive attitude toward themselves and others
- To develop a more positive attitude toward school as a result of participation in the student activities program.

What Is the Principal's Role?

If the student activities program is to be strong and effective, the principal must provide dynamic leadership. The principal's enthusiam for student activities will not only contribute to the morale of participating faculty and students but will enhance the prestige of the program. Since the principal cannot give complete personal attention to planning, organizing, and supervising the many out-of-school activities, delegation of responsibility is essential.

The size of the student body will probably determine if a full- or part-time director of student activities should be appointed. Whether the director comes from the ranks of teaching or administration is not important but the responsibility must be undertaken with enthusiasm.

The principal must remain flexible in supervising the activities program. Student interests change and activities should be modified accordingly. Clubs that were popular eight or 10 years ago may have lost their appeal. Activities with high interest and attendance should be encouraged.

The Student Activities Director

The person in charge of directing the school's activities must be enthusiastic, creative, and organized. The job requires strong and positive commitment. Secretarial assistance is essential. If paid personnel are not available, an effort should be made to secure volunteers. Since the job is a demanding one, the principal should give ample attention to the director's credentials and ability to get the job done. A typical job description of a student activities director should include the following:

- Supervise student government activities
- Coordinate all nonathletic activities in the school
- Monitor all club budgets and activities
- Assist in identifying and supervising activity advisers
- Maintain a calendar of events
- Publish periodic announcements of activities
- Coordinate the use of the gymnasium, auditorium, or other assembly areas on the campus
- Coordinate arrangements for speakers, performers, and other school guests
- Coordinate and arrange for transportation related to student activities
- Plan the school's awards assemblies
- Supervise school fund raising activities
- Maintain activity records
- Assist in planning and supervising schoolwide events such as homecoming festivities, dances, carnivals, etc.

- Arrange for publicity and announcements of school activities in the local press
- Assist in the arrangements for chaperons, security personnel, and use of facilities
- Meet regularly with club sponsors and student representatives
- Meet with sales representatives regarding student activities
- Enlist the aid of parent and faculty volunteers
- Prepare budget for activities office
- Assign bulletin board space throughout the building.

The Activity Adviser

The success or failure of the student organization or activity rests squarely in the hands of the adviser. Unfortunately, too many activity advisers are virtually self-selected. While this may not pose a problem for a given school, the principal and activities director should, in the interest of good management, give serious consideration to selection. Some activities require unique skills, long hours, and little or no tangible compensation; therefore, criteria for selection of the advisers should be established.

Some criteria to consider in selecting an adviser are:

- ✓ Local and unique needs
- ✓ Interest and motivation
- ✓ Skills and training
- ✓ Personality traits
- ✓ Physical stamina.

Appointment of advisers should be on an annual basis. Circumstances vary from year to year and the superior adviser of five years ago may be mediocre or ineffective today. Criteria for selection may also change with local conditions. Adviser job descriptions should be reviewed annually to allow for reassessment of priorities.

Compensation for the Adviser

In a recent nationwide study of 600 secondary schools, more than 40 percent provided reduced course loads for teachers involved in music,

publications, drama, and speech activities. More than 40 percent of the schools surveyed gave supplemental pay to advisers of publications, music groups, cheerleading, drama, speech, and intramurals. Less than 30 percent of the schools gave compensation for advisers of interest clubs, honor societies, and service clubs. Student government advisers received the most mixed reaction, with 24 percent extended reduced course loads.

Most principals and activity directors are governed by district policy in reducing course loads or granting supplemental pay. In any event, care should be taken to ensure that inequities do not exist in these forms of compensation. Teacher morale is adversely affected if compensation is indiscriminately awarded.

Many factors should be considered in granting compensation for activity sponsors. A. E. Blecke, principal of Antioch High School, Antioch, Ill. proposes the following responsibilities for consideration in establishing compensation:

- Student contact hours
- Preparation and planning
- Exposure and expectations
- Weekend and holiday involvement
- Instructional and organizational skills
- Student-adviser ratio
- Equipment management
- Travel supervision
- Other adults supervised.

It is important that activity advisers be included in the planning and establishing of any policy that dictates forms of compensation. Faculty input will establish credibility for whatever policy is implemented.

Administering Student Activities

To ensure an effectively organized activities program, a coordinated agenda for the year must be developed. While the club sponsor's commitment, organizational ability, and enthusiasm are important, strong support and direction from the principal and activities director are essential. Planning the year's agenda requires teamwork and a great deal of time. Since one of the main objectives of student activities is to teach the student to be a self-directed and contributing member of society, emphasis should be placed on student participation in the planning and implementation phase. Attention should be given to the following when preparing the annual agenda:

- A written statement of objectives should be required from all student organizations at the beginning of the school year. This might be handled most effectively by a school form developed for the purpose.

- An inservice program should be conducted for all activity advisers and officers either prior to the opening or during the first week of school. During this program the principal and activities director should articulate their goals and expectations.

- Each school should plan its program in congruence with the school's philosophy and school and community characteristics.

- Activity advisers and officers should be encouraged to affiliate with state and national organizations which can provide them with invaluable assistance. The NASSP Office of Student Activities, for example, publishes a Student Council Handbook that is available to all member schools.

- Fund raising in the school can be a rather controversial subject; some school districts have developed rigid policies regarding any form of fund raising. Judgment in dealing with this matter should be made in accordance with local school-community expectations. Fund Raising for Student Councils, published by NASSP Office of Student Activities, is a good reference for directors of student activities.

Evaluating Student Activities

Effective methods for evaluation should be devised to determine whether or not the goals of the activities program are being met. Evaluation is an essential part of the activities program that must not be neglected. Good evaluation tools will indicate the need to expand or reduce extracurricular offerings.

Evaluation serves many purposes and is accomplished in a variety of ways. Formal assessment procedures are important and criteria for determining the success of the activities program must be devised. A checklist and rating scales may be utilized. Some criteria to be considered in assessing a program are:

- ✓ Are activities in keeping with the school's philosophy?
- ✓ What percentage of the student body participates?
- ✓ Are activities varied enough to meet all student needs?

- ✓ Are students new to the school encouraged to participate?
- ✓ Are activities designed to develop skills that will be useful after graduation?
- ✓ Are services to the school and community provided?
- ✓ Are students exploited in any way?
- ✓ Are provisions made to prevent a small group of students from monopolizing the leadership positions? (Is there a point system?)
- ✓ Are supervision and security adequate for all activities?
- ✓ Are accounting procedures adequate to account for activity funds?
- ✓ Are activities adapted for handicapped students?

One widely used assessment instrument is published by the National Study of School Evaluation, 5201 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, Va. 22041. Evaluative Criteria is designed to measure the quality of student governance, student performances and school assemblies, school publications, music programs, social activities, service activities, and other student activities. Planning and Evaluating Student Activity Programs, published by the NASSP Office of Student Activities, is another helpful reference.

The Student Council

The student council is central to a successful student activities program. A viable student government is often the key to good student morale. If the student government is operating at optimum level, all other student activities will benefit. The principal must provide visible direction and leadership in student government. Regular meetings of the principal and student government officers are important; such idea exchanges go a long way in creating a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect.

Student government associations should be encouraged to affiliate with the National Association of Student Councils (NASC). This association sponsors a national conference for student leaders and activity advisers and week-long sessions at eight National Leadership Training Centers. Every other summer the association sponsors an International Student Leadership Program aboard a cruise ship visiting foreign countries. Domestic student exchange programs are also held. The Student Advocate, a magazine for student council members, is published each month for NASC members.

To Illustrate

Gulfport High School
Martin Glendron, Principal

100 Perry St.
Gulfport, Miss. 39501

Student activities at Gulfport High School have been revitalized by two new programs -- Club Recruiting Days, and Club of the Month. Club activity has been intensified and students are more enthusiastic.

Club recruiting days are held during the first week of school. The objective of the recruitment week activities is to increase participation in the student organizations and provide students with information and direction in making their choices. Booths are set up around the campus and staffed with student leaders who explain each organization's activities and benefits to the members, the school, and the community.

The Club of the Month Program is a competitive activity which spotlights the special activities of various clubs each month. Service projects, special assemblies, and club publicity are a few of the ways clubs earn points toward being named Club of the Month. Monthly points are accumulated throughout the year toward a Club of the Year award which is announced at the end-of-the-year awards ceremony. A permanent plaque is kept in the trophy case with the names of the annual winners.

Thomas B. Doherty High School
Charles M. Gaul, Principal
Rex C. Gisler, Director of Student Activities

4515 Barnes Road
Colorado Springs, Colo. 80917

Thomas B. Doherty High School is a year-round high school of 1,900 students that has developed a year-round cocurricular program to meet the needs of vacationing students, students who are in school, and the community.

The school year is divided into six sessions with students attending school during four of the six sessions. To promote student body cohesiveness, a major theme is chosen each session to bring all students together for a week of varied activities. Students who are in school and those on vacation anticipate these weeks. They see their friends and vacationing students maintain their loyalty and school spirit.

One activity was "Up, Up and Away Week," which began the school year in late July. The week featured balloon tether rides on the football field, a raffle to win a hot air balloon ride over the city, a brown bag outdoor concert on the patio during lunch, a balloon send-off, balloon grams to a favorite person, and a dance.

Along with the social activities, each session also includes several leadership retreats, an antivandalism program, topical seminars with experts from the city, recognition programs for outstanding students and staff, and monthly community service projects such as cleaning the United States Olympic Training Center.

The activity program at Doherty High School is educational and recreational. Because of the dedication, enthusiasm, and pride of the student body and staff, an effective activities program has been created to meet the needs of all students during all sessions of the year-round school.

Lakes Junior High School — 15th and Hastings Ave.
Clifford D. Lantz, Principal — Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814

Student activities at Lakes Junior High School are enriched by a Domestic Exchange Program. The purpose of this program is to give additional educational experience to selected students with leadership potential. Small groups of students from other parts of the United States are invited to spend one week in the school attending classes and participating in school activities. Lakes Junior High students host the guests in their homes, and community activities are planned for the visit. At a later date, the host students visit their guests' school for a week.

Communities are selected which differ culturally, economically, and geographically from the home school. The exchange is funded through a combination of student personal support and school activities funds.

The Madeira School — 8328 Georgetown Pike
Charles Saltzman, Headmaster — Greenway, Va. 22067

Madeira's cocurricular program affords students a unique opportunity to discover that education is not confined to the classroom. Students are able to sample a variety of community, political, and career-oriented volunteer jobs in the Washington, D.C. area. The program is conducted each Wednesday.

The freshman year. The program is designed to improve students' basic reading, writing, and decision-making skills and to introduce students to new areas of interest. Students participate in "Outdoor Adventure," a program of survival techniques, orienteering, and group cooperation.

The sophomore year. At the beginning of the year students talk with representatives of hospitals, area elementary schools, day care centers, nurseries, homes for the aged, halfway houses, etc. to determine which area best fits their interests. A part of each Wednesday is set aside to contribute volunteer services in the institution or agency of the student's choice.

The junior year. Each Wednesday, students do volunteer work in offices on Capitol Hill, at government agencies, or in approved political organizations. Most juniors serve as interns in offices of the United States Congressmen or Senators, although a few work in the White House or such agencies as Common Cause.

The senior year. The senior job generally requires the student to assume more initiative and responsibility, and is a culmination of the previous job experiences. The student learns how to interview and work in a professional atmosphere. Jobs range from veterinary assistants and curator assistants, to stage photographers and library researchers.

Cherry Creek School District 5
Kurby Lyle, District Athletic & Activities Director
4700 S. Yosemite St.
Englewood, Colo. 80111

Activities in this school district are coordinated (in part) by a committee of four teachers representing the secondary, middle, and elementary schools; four administrators from the three school levels; and the district director of athletics and activities (who serves in a nonvoting capacity). Teachers are appointed by the local teachers' association; administrators are appointed by the superintendent. Recommendations for supplemental pay to activities advisers are made by this group.

All proposals for new activities in the schools must be reviewed by the committee which has done extensive research to establish criteria for interest clubs, service clubs, and performing groups.

The committee meets monthly with periodic full-day sessions. Principals and advisers are encouraged to appear before the committee in the interest of their schools and activities.

George Mason Junior-Senior High School
George Thoms, Principal
7124 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, Va. 22043

Student activities in this school are coordinated by a Middle School Council Association (MSCA) for grades 6-8, and the Student Coordinating Council (SCC) for grades 9-12.

High School. The SCC president and vice president are elected by students in the spring. Representatives to the SCC are elected or appointed by each class, club, or student organization. Meetings are held bi-weekly.

Objectives of the Student Coordinating Council are:

- To generate positive student-faculty-administrator relations
- To represent the interests of students from all school organizations
- To coordinate fund raising
- To assist in planning school assemblies.

Middle School. The objectives of the Middle School Council Association are:

- To provide a forum for discussion
- To coordinate student activities in grades 6-8
- To advise the administration about fund raising
- To sponsor middle school activities.

Meetings are held bi-weekly, and involve 12-15 students from grades 6-8.

PARTIAL LISTING OF STUDENT ACTIVITY PUBLICATIONS

NASSP Office of Student Activities

1981-1982

A Guide to Student Council Projects
A Handbook for the Student Activity Adviser
College Courses in the High School
Coming of Age in America. Voter Education Curriculum Guide for High School Students
Communication and Leadership
Competency Tests and Graduation Requirements. Second Edition
Developing a Student Leadership Class
Fund Raising for Student Councils
Group Dynamics for Student Activities
How to Run an Efficient and Effective Student Activities Program
Improving Your Student Council
Is There Value in Values Education?
Junior High School Council: Foundation for Leadership
Models for Student Participation
NASSP Advisory List of National Contests and Activities 1981-82
NASSP Commencement Manual, Seventh Edition Revised
Now You're in the Middle: A Handbook for the Student Council Adviser
Of Love and Magic. The Junior High/Middle School Student Council Adviser
Organizing a Middle School or Junior High School Student Council
Overseas Summer Study Programs
Parliamentary Procedures Without Stress
Planning and Evaluating Student Activity Programs
Profiles of Student Council Officers
Responsible Student Involvement

Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised
Student Activities in Secondary Schools. A Bibliography
Student Council Activity Resource Book
Student Council Handbook
Student Council Leadership File
Student Structures: Moving Toward Student Government
Student's Guide to Scholarships and Loans
Students and the Law
The Effective Student Council in the 80's
The Reasonable Exercise of Authority, II
The Spirit of Student Council
The Student Council Adviser
The 12th Grade: A Critical Year
What's What with Who's Who?
Winning Combinations for Junior High/Middle School Student Councils
Workshops: Laboratories for Student Leaders
Youth to Adulthood: Impasse and Dilemma in the Western World

Order form and prices available upon request.

This *Practitioner* was prepared by Joan B. Grady, assistant principal, Laredo Middle School, Aurora, Colo.

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